



SENATE

MINUTES AND ACTIONS- DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

13 NOVEMBER 2024 - 14:00-17:00 – HYBRID MEETING (SEMINAR ROOMS A/B, LSI BUILDING AND MICROSOFT TEAMS)

NB text in BLACK is for publication; text in BLUE will be redacted for publication.

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ATTENDEES *(listed according to the membership as detailed in [Ordinance 20](#))*

- a) **Chair: Professor Lisa Roberts, President & Vice-Chancellor**
- b) Professor Dan Charman, Senior Vice-President & Provost
- c) Professor Tim Quine, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience
Professor Krasi Tsaneva-Atanasova, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and

- Impact
- Professor Richard Follett, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement
- Professor Martin Siegert, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Cornwall
- Professor Rajani Naidoo, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, People and Culture
- Stuart Brocklehurst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Business Engagement and Innovation
- d) Professor Beverley Hawkins, Dean for Taught Students
- Professor Stacey Hynd, Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College
- e) Professor Alex Gerbasi (ESE)
- Professor Sallie Lamb (HLS)
- Professor Gareth Stansfield (HASS)
- f) Professor Anni Vanhatalo (HLS)
- Professor Adam Watt (HASS)
- Professor Dave Hosken (ESE)
- g) James Hutchinson, Director of Education Services and Student Experience
- h) Professor Mat Collins (ESE)
- Professor Loukas Balafoutas (ESE)
- Professor Nicola Thomas (ESE)
- Professor Ion Sucala (ESE)
- Professor Stefano Pascucci (ESE)
- Professor Fiona Cox (HASS)
- Professor Tina Phillips (HASS)
- Professor Jane Milling (HASS)
- Professor Naomi Sykes (HASS)
- Professor Rebecca Langlands (HASS)
- Professor James Wakefield (HLS)
- Professor Joanna Smith (HLS)
- Professor Karen Knapp (HLS)
- Professor Clare Hulme (HLS)
- Professor Mark Wilson (HLS)
- i) Professor Barrie Cooper (ESE)
- Dr Sarah Hodge (ESE)
- Professor Tim Naylor (ESE)
- Professor Christine Parkin Hughes (ESE)
- Dr Edvard Glucksman (ESE)
- Dr Raphaëlle Haywood (ESE)
- Professor Alison Truelove (ESE)
- Professor Ben Zissimos (ESE)
- Professor Daniel Fountain (HASS)
- Professor Fabrizio Nevola (HASS)
- Professor Sue Prince (HASS)
- Dr Alex Fairfax-Cholmley (HASS)
- Professor Brian Rappert (HASS)
- Professor Laura Salisbury (HASS)
- Dr Birgul Yilmaz (HASS)
- Professor Ruth Garside (HLS)
- Dr Ioanna Kapantai (HLS)
- Dr Maisha Reza (HLS)
- Dr Abby Russell (HLS)
- Dr Hope Gangata (HLS)
- Professor Katie Lunnon (HLS)
- Dr Genevieve Williams (HLS)
- Dr Dominic Wiredu-Boakye (HLS)
- j) Mike Shore-Nye (Vice President and Registrar and Secretary)

- k) *Vacancy*, Academic Director, INTO
- l) Alex Martin, President Students' Guild
Sebastian Racisz, Education Officer, Students' Guild
India Walton-Salmon, Societies and Employability Officer, Students' Guild
Thomas Tran, Communities and Equality Officer, Students' Guild
- m) Connie Chilcott, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union President Exeter
Fina Day, Vice-President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union
Marketa Carruthers, Vice-President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union

IN ATTENDANCE:

Totty Brobyn	Committee Secretariat Administrator (Minutes)
Dr Jeremy Diaper	Assistant Director, Governance
Imelda Rogers	Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources
	Director of Teaching Excellence and Enhancement (<i>for item 9</i>)
Roscoe Hastings Jess	Head of Learning Piloting and Scaling (<i>for item 9</i>)
Johnson Heather	Director of Education Innovation (<i>for item 9</i>)
Haseley Peter Clack	Director of Global Engagement (<i>for item 14</i>)

APOLOGIES:

Alison Chambers (CEO, Students' Guild)
 Professor Duncan Russel (HASS)
 Professor David Jones (HASS)
 Professor Jon Brown (HLS)

ACTIONS

MINUTE	ACTION	LEAD
3	To provide confirmation of agreed Senate representation on Education Board and Postgraduate Research Board.	Senate Team
8	To schedule the summary report on the 'Your Say, Your Way' survey at subsequent Senate meeting to provide an overview of the feedback and key findings.	Senate Team
9	Education Board to consider a final version of the skills framework following Senate feedback and skills mapping will be progressed through the work already underway in pilot departments.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins
9	That the C4C team will continue to consult widely and encourage feedback from Senators on the Course and Assessment principles ahead of further discussion at Education Board and to encourage discussion led by HoDs and others within the Faculty.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins

9	To undertake further analysis on the interdependencies between the Curriculum for Change programme, timetabling and the supply and demand of teaching and learning spaces and produce further modelling scenarios to identify any potential issues.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins
9	That the Curriculum for Change team would develop a set of FAQs to help respond to frequently asked questions and clarify any particular areas of concern or uncertainty.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins
9	That further consideration would be given to how to socialise more widely the pedagogical research that had informed the Curriculum for Change programme.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins
12	To review the capital refresh programme in relation to TEF performance, with a particular focus on low NSS scores in 'learning resources' to identify potential opportunities to utilize capital spend to make strategic and targeted improvements.	Mike Shore-Nye
14	That a further assurance report would be scheduled for Senate on the academic elements of the TNE partnerships in Egypt and China.	Richard Follet
15	To provide a clearer breakdown of priority actions to improve performance in Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) in table and aligned to key thematic areas for the report presented to Council on 10 December 2024.	Mike Shore-Nye
15	To schedule a Senate 'deep-dive' on enhancing institutional performance in NSS.	Mike Shore-Nye

DECISIONS

MINUTE	DECISION	LEAD
9	ENDORSED the continuation of work on the Curriculum for Change programme in alignment with the proposed C4C course and assessment design principles, and to utilize this as an initial set of working principles to help facilitate further engagement, discussion and debate in close consultation with Faculties and Departments, and inform their ongoing development and refinement.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins
9	AGREED that further discussion and debate would be required on the Course and Assessment principles that were connected to the Academic Year and Immersive Module and that these would be discussed in further detail at Senate in 2025, including a 'deep dive' session to elicit feedback and input to refine these principles.	Curriculum for Change Team
9	ENDORSED the need to continue to progress the Curriculum for Change programme to enable meaningful programme redesign to be guided at pace and that it was important to have a working set of principles to support this.	Curriculum for Change Team
9	AGREED: That a final set of principles would be scheduled for the June Senate meeting for approval.	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins

9	ENDORSED the skills framework element of Curriculum for Change	Tim Quine / Beverley Hawkins
10	ENDORSED the Academic Assurance 2023/24: Quality and Standards (OfS B Conditions) report to Council (10 December 2024) to provide assurance for the 2023/24 Academic Year.	Mike Shore-Nye
11	ENDORSED the Degree Outcomes Statement to the Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Sub-Committee (28 November 2024) and Council (10 December 2024).	Mike Shore-Nye
12	ENDORSED: The update paper on TEF 2027 Preparedness for onward consideration by the Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Sub-Committee (28 November 2024) and Council (10 December 2024).	Mike Shore-Nye

1. Chair's introduction and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Senators to the first Senate meeting of the academic year 2024-25 and extended a welcome to the newly elected members, the new Sabbatical officers and the new ex-officio members.
- 1.2 There were no new declarations of interest in relation to the agenda items.

2. Minutes from the meeting of 19 June 2024 (SEN/01/24-25)

- 2.1 The committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024 and noted that the outstanding actions from the November meeting of Senate were in progress.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 Following a call for expressions of interest to join Senate sub-committees, the chair thanked Senators who had put themselves forward to be representatives on Education Board. A review of the volunteers and current membership would be conducted to ensure appropriately diverse representation and optimal balance of skills, expertise and academic backgrounds.
- 3.2 As there had been more volunteers to join Education Board than the current vacancies available, an invitation would be extended to one of the volunteers to join Postgraduate Research Board instead.
- 3.3 A further call was made for a Senate representative to join the Health and Safety Committee.
- 3.4 Members were also encouraged to put themselves forward to be added to the list of Senate volunteers to be involved in academic recruitment panels.

ACTION: to provide confirmation of agreed Senate representation on Education Board and Postgraduate Research Board.

4. Senate Action Log 2024-25(SEN/02/24-25)

- 4.1 Senate noted the action log for the 2024-25 academic year, which had been updated to include actions from the previous meeting in June 2024.

5. Senate Business Schedule 2024-25 (SEN/03/24-25)

- 5.1 Senate noted the business schedule for the 2024-25 academic year which was provided for information.

6. Report of the President and Vice-Chancellor (SEN/04/24-25)

- 6.1 The Chair presented the report from the President & Vice-Chancellor and provided further updates from across the University and wider Higher Education sector.
- 6.2 The University had recently concluded a productive delegation visit to Southeast Asia, encompassing alumni engagements in Singapore and Malaysia, as well as strategic meetings with philanthropic stakeholders throughout the region.

Closed Minute – Commercial in Confidence

- 6.3 The University celebrated the following recent successes:

- 6.3.1 A £10 million funding grant has been secured to establish a new Centre for Net Positive Health and Climate Solutions, supported by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and involving several key partners, including the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the National Trust, Forest Research, and the Met Office. The Centre would be focused on delivering research that developed netpositive solutions to address the negative impacts of the climate crisis and its associated effects on human health. The hub would be located in Cornwall, with staff working across the UK. Congratulations were extended to academics within the European Centre for Environment and Human Health (ECEHH) who had led the successful bid.
- 6.3.2 The University of Exeter Business School had been named the UK's top business school in the UK according to the Corporate Knights Better World MBA rankings. This marked the second consecutive year the Business School had placed 1st for integrating sustainability and ESG themes within the MBA curriculum. The Exeter MBA ranked 10th globally out of 174 programmes and underscored the school's commitment to embedding sustainability in business education, equipping future leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to drive positive change in the business landscape.
- 6.3.3 The recently published Global Rankings of Academic Subjects 2024 recognized nine of the University of Exeter's academic research areas within the top 100, with an additional 11 positioned in the top 200. The results, compiled by Shanghai Rankings, evaluated 5,000 universities in 96 countries. Congratulations were extended to colleagues in the fields of Ecology, Earth Science, Geography, Atmospheric Science, Environmental Science and Engineering, Water Resources, Public Administration, Oceanography, and Sociology for their commendable achievements in securing a place among the top 100 academic disciplines.

7. Education and PGR Board Reports (Verbal Updates)

- 7.1 . The Dean for Taught Students and the Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College provided verbal updates on the latest issues from their respective areas.
- 7.2 . Professor Stacey Hynd (Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College) noted the following updates from the PGR Board:

Closed Minute – Confidential

- 7.2.1 The PGR Fee Waivers Policy was scheduled to be submitted to REIC to ensure consistency and clarity around fee waivers;
- 7.2.2 Three key workstreams in the Doctoral College Strategy were underway for the autumn term, including: i) Cost Recovery for Postgraduate Research; ii) Disability; and iii) International Students. A broader EDI evaluation would be the focus in the following term;

- 7.2.3 Approval had been granted by Education Board to establish a Professional Doctorates Working Group to improve support across education and PGR and share best practice;
 - 7.2.4 A new website was being created to more effectively prepare and support postgraduate students in fieldwork preparation for research trips in the UK and overseas;
 - 7.2.5 The Doctoral College was collaborating with Exeter Students' Guild and the Student's Union for new pilot representations for postgraduate students.
 - 7.2.6 There had been strong engagement with the new supervisor training.
- 7.3 The announcement of the Dean's Commendation for PGR Academic Citizenship had garnered over 125 nominations and results would be announced in December. Following a query about the Dean's Commendation Award for PGR Academic Citizenship, the Dean for Postgraduate Research confirmed that the timeframe for current nominations had been a pilot for the new scheme. Moving forwards it was intended that the awards would be run on an annual basis, with the deadline for nominations in March prior to final awards being announced in June.
- 7.4 Professor Beverley Hawkins (Dean for Taught Students) noted the following updates from the Education Board. An overview of recent business was provided including:
- 7.4.1 The TQA manual had been migrated to a more accessible format over the summer. The timeframes for processing amendments to the TQA manual had changed to ensure all alterations would be made over the summer and not in-year to maintain a consistent experience for students;
 - 7.4.2 There were plans to review teaching excellence and teaching excellent monitoring meetings in order to better support departments to review quality, develop data informed interventions, and ensure inclusion of the Success for All agenda. The External Examiners Handbook was also under review.
 - 7.4.3 A new curriculum management system was scheduled to be implemented in the summer of 2026. A thorough and robust tendering process had been undertaken and a provider had been chosen.

8. Student President Reports (SEN/05/24-25) and (SEN/06/24-25)

- 8.1 The President of the Students' Guild presented their report to Senate and highlighted the following points:
- 8.1.1 The ongoing representation review was being integrated with the academic representation review conducted last year. It had now entered the piloting phase, focusing on five departments with low engagement or underperformance in NSS;
 - 8.1.2 The 'Your Say, Your Way' survey had launched over the past week to provide a mechanism to obtain feedback on the student experience beyond the NSS. There had been c. 5,000 responses received and feedback was currently being reviewed. The primary areas of focus included students' sense of belonging, accessibility, integration, teaching quality, and extracurricular opportunities.
- ACTION:** To schedule the summary report on the 'Your Say, Your Way' survey at subsequent Senate meeting to provide an overview of the feedback and key findings.
- 8.2 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union drew attention to the following points in their report:
- 8.2.1 There had been excellent engagement with the 125 course representatives and subject chairs, including training on EDI and sustainability.

- 8.2.2 There had been strong levels of student participation and engagement in the Curriculum for Change focus groups launched this week, alongside continued dialogue with encampment working groups.
- 8.2.3 Sir Richard Atkins (Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair of Council) had chaired a series of deep dives on Assessment and Feedback to identify recommendations to enable continuous improvement in NSS scores.

9. Curriculum for Change (SEN/07/24-25)

- 9.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the update on Curriculum for Change (C4C) programme which was designed to realise the University's strategic commitment to develop a distinctive and financially sustainable model for education by 2030.
- 9.2 In the development of the Education Strategy, a commitment was made to develop a distinctive model for Exeter which launched in September 2019. The covid-19 pandemic created a necessary diversion towards digital transformation of education, which had stimulated University-wide innovation and adaptation across the university to respond with immediacy to this global challenge.
- 9.3 The financial challenges facing the sector created a strategic imperative to change the curriculum and create a distinctive model of education for the sector. With the flatlining of the home undergraduate fee, the University and wider Russell Group institutions were in a position where it cost more per capita to deliver UG education than the current tuition fee. It was noted that the

financial challenges facing the sector would not be resolved by the recently announced uplift to the home undergraduate fee and that this this would only marginally offset the recent increases to employers' National Insurance rates.
- 9.4 Recent statistics indicated that c. 75% of students felt anxious about classes, c. 34% could not afford rent or housing, and c. 44% were struggling to meet new people or make friends, leading to deeper thinking on how Exeter could better support improvements to the mental health and wellbeing of students through the design of the curriculum and ensure that programmes helped students to build networks and a strong sense of belonging at Exeter.
- 9.5 Recent work undertaken by Nicky King (Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, ESE) had enabled the University to track awarding gaps and outcomes back to the initiation of programmes. Vrinda Nayak (Associate Professor, Clinical and Biomedical Sciences) had also led work to develop the transformative education framework, focused on inclusive pedagogy and curriculum and moving towards more universal design for learning.
- 9.6 Academic Support had been renewed with the recently launched pastoral mentoring programme. Nicky Thomas and colleagues in the Business School have pioneered skills mapping and the development of a skills framework. The number of 'With Proficiency Pathways' on offer had increased and had grown in popularity.
- 9.7 The overarching main strategic drivers for the Curriculum for Change programme were outlined as follows:
 - 9.7.1 Seizing Opportunities to build on the initiatives and innovations across the institution, to think about how we might diversify, and reuse materials prepared for UG curriculum to increase revenue generation, particularly in the online space;
 - 9.7.2 Addressing challenges relating to financial sustainability and student experience by adopting a sustainable delivery model that allows departments to generate sufficient margin from UG education to sustain research; address differential student experience and outcomes gaps; close

gaps on continuation, completion and rewarding; and improve graduate outcomes to add value and boost employability;

9.7.3 Supporting mental health and wellbeing by smoothing workload and assessment across the academic year for staff and students;

9.8 Curriculum for Change was built on strong foundations across the university and comprised of four components:

9.8.1.1 Simplifying Honours Programmes;

9.8.1.2 Boosting Graduate Prospects;

9.8.1.3 Addressing Belonging;

9.8.1.4 Smoothing and Internationalizing the Academic Year.

9.9 The Chair welcomed feedback and questions from Senate members. The following was noted in discussion:

9.10 A Senate member raised a number of areas of concern. They indicated that they had received feedback from colleagues in relation to the handling of recommendations within working groups and raised concerns that academic perspectives were not being appropriately considered or factored into the development of the proposals. It was also highlighted that the minutes from the recent Education Board meeting appeared to indicate that there were still unanswered questions which had not yet been resolved or addressed. Concerns were also raised over the endorsement of the principals at this juncture, and it was suggested that further Departmental level consultation and feedback was required to develop a more deep-seated understanding of how the principles would affect different disciplines and a clearer understanding of the institutional approach to exemptions.

9.11 It was also queried why Senate were being asked to endorse proposals that pertained to the academic year and immersive modules when these had not yet been discussed. It was suggested that a number of the principles pertaining to the academic year and immersive modules would necessitate further review, including principles 4, 6, 11, 12 and 16.

9.12 In response to the suggestion that principle 16 would increase inclusivity, it was indicated that further evidence was necessary to substantiate this and suggested that amending the assessment timeline to enable immediate assessment following teaching could inadvertently have a negative impact on student's learning outcomes.

9.13 It was suggested that the proposals would benefit from more detailed departmental feedback in order to shape and inform the Curriculum for Change programme and that further consideration should be given to strategic opportunities to enhance programme level assessment. It was proposed that the proposals should not be endorsed at this meeting to enable more time to consider the proposals in sufficient detail to inform the wider strategic picture. It was also suggested that the Course and Assessment principles that were connected to the Academic Year and Immersive Module require further discussion as part of the consultation on these themes.

9.14 These concerns were seconded by another Senate member who wished to highlight that the proposal to include teaching and assessment in one term could be detrimental to student mental health. It was highlighted that the proposed term structure reflected a typical term in the US and there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that there had in some instances been an increase in the use of 'study drugs' which had become increasingly prevalent as a result of stress and anxiety around the examination and assessment period. It was also indicated that the proposed structure of teaching and assessment would potentially

have a negative impact on student experience and learning outcomes, with the possibility that students may be less likely to retain information beyond that term.

9.15 In response to the proposal that teaching and assessment should take place in one term, the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) stated that it was anticipated this would help to alleviate the pressure on students who need to work through vacation periods, reduce learning gaps and help to create parity of student experience between programmes. Distributing assessments throughout the year would spread the assessment load on students and significantly reduce the stress associated with end of year examinations. Senate members indicated that it would be helpful to provide Senate with clearer evidence for this.

9.16 Another member of Senate also highlighted that whilst colleagues were enthused about the strategic vision to develop a transformative education at Exeter and increase levels of interdisciplinarity in alignment with Strategy 2030, questions had been raised with them surrounding timetabling and potential challenges that would result from attempting to co-create interdisciplinary programme activities. It was indicated that it would be helpful to give further consideration to undertaking a timetabling simulation exercise to see whether it was feasible to map the proposed programmes and

modules within the current constraints, including availability of study space, specialist lab space, and student and staff time. Some Senators indicated that there did not appear to be widespread understanding and awareness of the Curriculum for Change programme in certain Departments and indicated that it would be helpful to facilitate more widespread engagement.

9.17 In response to this particular issue it was highlighted that a Curriculum for Change SharePoint site had been created to promote wider institutional visibility and that there had been extensive undertake to engage deeply with academic staff across Faculties and Departments, including a series of Communication and Engagement events, workshop events, and staff drop ins. It was noted that these engagement activities on C4C groups had Faculty and Department representation. It was noted that Appendix 3 of the paper provided a consultation journey map which provided an overview of the consultation undertaken to date and further planned engagement activities in 2024.

9.18 Senate members were encouraged to actively engage in future sessions and participate in scheduled events to provide constructive feedback and input to help inform the development of the C4C programme. The Dean for Taught Students and Co-Chair of the Education Board thanked Senate for their feedback and also offered to attend any additional departmental meetings to address any specific questions or concerns and enable ongoing discussions across Faculties and Departments. It was also highlighted that there would be a further drop-in session for those with questions scheduled on 20 November 2024 which would provide further opportunity for consultation and ongoing discussion with Departments and Faculties.

9.19 Further concerns were raised in terms of the timeframes for the delivery of the programme and the lack of references to pedagogical research in the Senate documentation. It was affirmed that it may be helpful to communicate the pedagogical research that had informed the emerging recommendations and approach to help communicate more widely amongst academic staff and ensure strong buy-in and engagement.

9.20 Whilst the aforementioned concerns were recognised and acknowledged, a number of Senators indicated that they felt there was broad understanding and support for the strategic rationale for curriculum reform. A number of Senators affirmed that there had been a clear strategic rationale and vision for the programme and that they were aware that a wide-ranging number of colleagues (both at Exeter and Cornwall) had been closely involved in detailed discussions and were positive about the fundamental proposals. It was also affirmed that positive feedback had also been received from students who were clear on the employability benefits and recognized the need for the University to become more efficient in the way it approached teaching delivery, and that these proposals were designed to assist with this

strategic change. It was noted that where questions had been raised in the Environment, Science and Economy (ESE) faculty meetings, these had often been clarified and that many initial concerns expressed had been alleviated or addressed in the course of discussion. It was recognized that there were still a number of issues to be worked through, but that it was anticipated these could be addressed through continued engagement and discussion across Faculties and Departments.

- 9.21 Alex Martin (Guild President, Exeter Students' Guild) noted that students were broadly supportive of the proposed recommendations, including the intention to use opportunities to embed accessibility and the opportunity for students' education and co-curricular activities to be tailored with employability and inclusivity in mind.
- 9.22 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) stated that the Curriculum for Change programme remained paramount in the face of significant sector-wide recruitment challenges for both international recruitment and domestic students. It was anticipated that the recruitment challenges could intensify in future years, as whilst it was projected that there would be a rise in the number of 18 year olds up until 2030, it was anticipated that this would be followed by a sharp decline in these numbers. This forecast data reinforced the need for the University to clearly differentiate itself in the UK student marketplace and that the Curriculum Change programme would provide the University with a strategic advantage in an increasingly competitive recruitment environment and would result in a curriculum that could be deliver efficiently and in alignment with students who were looking specifically for employability skills and cultural competency.
- 9.23 It was acknowledged that there were elements in some of the principles that were interconnected with the proposals for the new academic year and immersive module, and that the proposed resolution and recommendation for Senate could be reframed so that Senate would not be required to endorse those specific principles at this juncture. Nevertheless, it was reaffirmed that it would be important to broadly endorse the wider proposals and concepts at this stage to ensure the recommended direction of travel. It was reinforced that the current model of educational delivery remained unsustainable and it was imperative that progress was made on developing a portfolio that facilitated an efficient, financially sustainable and student-centred model.
- 9.24 It was acknowledged that there would need to be trust and transparency maintained in the process of reviewing and developing exemption criteria for outlier modules and programmes, and to ensure there was a deep-seated understanding of specific requirements for programmes accredited by professional bodies.
- 9.25 Following substantive discussion and debate, further clarification was sought as to what Senate was being requested to endorse during the meeting on 13 November 2024. The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) advised that in response to Senate feedback during the course of discussion, it would be prudent to only seek endorsement for the specific principles not dependent on academic year and immersive modules. The fundamental importance of the University embedding into its programmes opportunities to bring students together for them to develop their networks and sense of belonging was affirmed. Department by department mapping would be undertaken in the coming months and further consultation would be taking place so any potential further obstacles encountered to the implementation of the principles could be shared with Senate in due course.
- 9.26 Senate recognized and acknowledged the feedback and different perspectives provided in the course of discussion and agreed that extensive engagement would continue to be undertaken with colleagues across all Faculties and Departments, including the Directors of Education and Student Experience and wider representatives, to ensure the development of Curriculum for Change programme was informed by continued collaboration and consultation. Senate recognized the need to map skills across programmes and modules.

Senate **ENDORSED** the continuation of work on the curriculum for change programme in alignment with the proposed C4C course and assessment design principles, and to utilize this as an initial set of working principles to help facilitate further engagement, discussion and debate in close consultation with Faculties and Departments, and inform their ongoing development and refinement.

Senate **AGREED** that further discussion and debate would be required on the Course and Assessment principles that were connected to the Academic Year and Immersive Module and that these would be discussed in further detail at Senate in 2025, including a 'deep dive' session to elicit feedback and input to refine these principles.

Senate **ENDORSED** the need to continue to progress the Curriculum for Change programme to enable meaningful changes programme redesign to be guided at pace and that it was important to have a working set of principles to support this.

Senate **AGREED** that a final set of principles would be scheduled for the June Senate meeting for approval.

Senate **ENDORSED** the skills framework element of Curriculum for Change.

ACTION: The Education Board to consider a final version of the skills framework following Senate feedback and skills mapping will be progressed through the work already underway in pilot departments.

ACTION: That the C4C team will continue to consult widely and encourage feedback from Senators on the Course and Assessment principles ahead of further discussion at Education Board and to encourage discussion led by HoDs and others within the Faculty.

ACTION: To undertake further analysis on the interdependencies between the Curriculum for Change programme, timetabling and the supply and demand of teaching and learning spaces and produce further modelling scenarios to identify any potential issues.

ACTION: That the Curriculum for Change team would develop a set of FAQs to help respond to frequently asked questions and clarify any particular areas of concern or uncertainty.

ACTION: That further consideration would be given to how to socialise more widely the pedagogical research that had informed the Curriculum for Change programme.

10 Academic Assurance 2023/24: Quality and Standards (OfS B Conditions) (SEN/08/24-25)

- 10.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the Academic Assurance report on Quality and Standards which provided a summary of key actions undertaken in 2023/24; an analysis of performance in key measures of the quality of education; and summary of key actions being undertaken in 2024/25.
- 10.2 Senate noted its duty to provide assurance to Council regarding the academic standards and quality of education, including adherence to the OfS B Conditions of Registration;
- 10.3 The paper was structured around the OfS B Conditions of Registration and included a reflection on enhancements to quality assurance in relation to the new Access and Participation plan, the work on Curriculum for Change, the launch of the International Student Experience strategy, and the work of the Student Academic Support project.

- 10.4 The report rated the performance metrics around student satisfaction and graduate outcomes and on degree standards and the University's TEF rating.

Senate **ENDORSED** the Academic Assurance 2023/24: Quality and Standards (OfS B Conditions) report to Council (10 December 2024) to provide assurance for the 2023/24 Academic Year.

11 Degree Outcomes Statement (SEN/09/24-25)

- 11.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the update on the Degree Outcomes Statement.
- 11.2 That whilst the Degree Outcomes Statement was not a regulatory requirement, the Quality Council (with the backing of Universities UK (UUK) and Guild HE), actively encouraged Higher Education providers to prepare and publish statements.
- 11.3 Senate was strongly supportive of continuing to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement in the public domain and welcomed the use of the statement to enable continued focus on degree classifications and the maintenance of academic statements, but ensure co-ordinated approach to eliminating awarding gaps and ensuring success for all students.
- 11.4 It was noted that it would be helpful to incorporate the following additional information:
- 11.4.1 As a result of the lack of available data from the HESA Data futures programme, it would be useful to include high-level sector trend analysis to at least provide a broader overview of sector trends and wider policy environment, including signposting what had recently changed, was in process of changing, and what had remained the same;
- 11.4.2 It was affirmed that it would also be helpful to include this contextual information and high-level comparison with the wider sector in future reports in the event of further issues surrounding timeliness of HESA data;
- 11.4.3 In relation to the footnote at the bottom of Appendix 2 (presentation of Comparable Data from the Internal Undergraduate Degree Classifications Report 2023/24), which clarified that trends relating to awarding gaps between demographic groups of students would be different to those presented in the University's Access and Participation Plan, it was highlighted that it would be helpful to include more detail here to more clearly foreground the APP data and provide an overview of the primary differences.

Senate **ENDORSED** the Degree Outcomes Statement to the Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Sub-Committee (28 November 2024) and Council (10 December 2024).

12 Update on TEF2027 Preparations (SEN/10/24-25)

- 12.1 The University had achieved a Gold overall rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 exercise underpinned by Gold ratings for both aspects of student experience and student experience. The University was one of only four Russell Group institutions to achieve this 'solid gold' rating (alongside Cambridge, Oxford and Warwick).
- 12.2 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the update on the preparations for TEF2027, including an update on the action plan agreed following the TEF 2023 results.
- 12.3 The report underscored the current status of the University's preparations for TEF 2027 and outlined commitments and interventions in key areas. A critical area for improvement which posed a risk to the

student experience was in the domain of Assessment and Feedback. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) dashboard indicated that Exeter was significantly below the established benchmark in this regard. A comprehensive series of deep dives into Assessment and Feedback (chaired by Sir Richard Atkins) was underway throughout the institution to address these challenges and enhance overall student satisfaction.

- 12.4 An additional key consideration highlighted in the paper pertained to the progression into graduate level employment as well as the measurement of educational outcomes. The skills framework embedded within the Curriculum for Change programme would facilitate the development of a comprehensive narrative on educational gain, aligning with the language and expectations set forth by the Office for Students (OfS). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) noted that the planned 'mock TEF' in the Academic Year 2025-26 would provide valuable insights into the most effective approach for developing an appropriate narrative.
- 12.5 Concerns were raised regarding the absence of ethnicity and gender reporting in the NSS, as well as the potential for assessment gaps to mirror other existing disparities. In response, it was clarified that the MI Hub dashboard enables data segmentation by ethnicity, gender, and other classifications, provided there is a sufficiently large sample size to ensure meaningful analysis. Additionally, significant efforts were being undertaken to address the gaps for students reporting disabilities.
- 12.6 The Dean for Taught Students noted that a recent study at Exeter revealed an interesting trend: students who achieved higher outcomes were more likely to assign lower scores to the University on the NSS.
- 12.7 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) responded to a query around case studies and noted that they would feed into the mock TEF to ensure they were captured throughout the TEF process.
- 12.8 A Senate member questioned where there were any plans to increase capital spend on departments where learning resources scored below benchmark. The Senior Vice-President and Provost responded that the realignment of the Capital Strategy was key component of the Strategy 2030 objectives and that development of Capital Plans had been informed by recent feedback on the student experience, especially in relation to investments in new IT suites for Computer and Data Science. The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary indicated that it would be helpful to explore in further detail any correlation between overall capital spend in departments and areas significantly below benchmark.
- 12.9 The Senior Vice President and Provost responded that the realignment of the Capital Strategy was a key component of the Strategy 2030 objectives. Capital development plans had been informed by student experience feedback, with particular investments directed towards new IT suites for Computer and Data Science. Ongoing discussions were taking place to identify additional areas for prioritized investment.

AGREED: to review the capital refresh programme in relation to TEF performance, with a particular focus on low NSS scores in 'learning resources' to identify potential opportunities to utilize capital spend to make strategic and targeted improvements.

ENDORSED: The update paper on TEF 2027 Preparedness for onward consideration by the Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Sub-Committee (28 November 2024) and Council (10 December 2024).

13 Assurance Reports on OfS Conditions of Registration (SEN/11A and 11B/24-25)

- 13.1 The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary introduced the reports.
- 13.2 The first assurance report (SEN/11A/24-25) focused on the new OfS condition of registration in relation to harassment and sexual misconduct. A task and finish group, chaired by the General Counsel and co-sponsored by the Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor (People and Culture)

and the Executive Divisional Director of HR, had been established to ensure the full implementation of any actions required to comply with the conditions of registration. The paper included an action plan, a gap analysis in relation to the condition of registration, and an overview of the progress being made.

- 13.3 The Guild of Students and Students' Union had also worked extensively on this area in recent years and therefore no concerns had been raised surrounding compliance with the new condition of registration and associated guidance which was scheduled to come into force on 1st August 2025.
- 13.4 A student member queried the proposed amendments to the student complaints procedure (SEN/19/24-25) which had been included within Part II for endorsement, particularly in relation to sexual misconduct, the whistleblowing process and steps for individuals to escalate concerns surrounding a procedural irregularity. The Senior Vice-President and Registrar and Secretary clarified that there was a separate sexual misconduct procedure, which was distinct from the student complaints procedure, but that the concerns would nevertheless be shared with the General Counsel and Director of Legal and Student Cases to reflect on the issues raised in consultation with relevant colleagues.
- 13.5 A Senate member raised the question of whether there should be greater academic representation on the Task and Finish Group to further enhance Senate oversight. In response, the Senior Vice-President and Registrar and Secretary provided assurance that there would continue to be regular reporting to Senate and Council, but also invited anyone interested in joining the group to express their interest so that consideration could be given to expanding the academic representation on the group.
- 13.6 In response to a query regarding the formal mechanisms for members of the public to raise complaints or concerns about staff members in a professional capacity outside of university grounds, the Executive Divisional Director of HR acknowledged that the University had previously had concerns raised about staff conduct in a non-professional context but that such instances were infrequent. It was noted that this would be further reflected on to identify potential opportunities to enhance the University webpages to make it easier to raise related concerns. The Senior Vice-President and Registrar and Secretary provided reassurance to Senate that any issues raised in relation to safeguarding were thoroughly investigated by the University's safeguarding officer.
- 13.7 The second assurance report (SEN/11B/24-25) addressed Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom. Whilst the government had paused the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, the University had completed preparatory work in anticipation of its implementation. Given the significant media coverage on the topic, it was noted that while it is not anticipated that a formal OfS condition of registration would be introduced, further assurances would be provided to Senate on Free Speech and the emergence of any regulatory requirements would continue to be actively monitored.

14 TNE Partnerships – China and Egypt (SEN/12 and 13/24-25)

- 14.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) and the Director of Global Engagement introduced the papers outlining the business cases for TNE partnerships.
- 14.2 Transnational education was an expanding market, with an increasing number of students pursuing UK degrees internationally. It was estimated that c. 570,000 students were currently enrolled in UK degrees delivered abroad. TNE partnerships helped strengthen institutional brand and reputation, supported income diversification and helped to foster research collaborations.
- 14.3 The University had identified two key strategic TNE partnership opportunities in China and Egypt. Following endorsement of the Outline Business Cases by UEB, Finance and Investment Committee and Council, the University was continuing to progress these opportunities.
- 14.4 The educational offer would be developed in collaboration with the Teaching Excellence and Enhancement

team and presented to Senate in the coming months. This would include further information on key elements of the academic portfolio. This approach would ensure strong academic assurance and a commitment to delivering an exceptional student experience. There would be subsequent engagement and discussions with the Exeter Students' Guild and Students' Union regarding the provision of support and advice for students.

- 14.5 A student member sought assurance around safeguarding international students particularly in the case of freedom of speech, and asked if there were any mitigations to protect students particularly those who might take part in protests. The Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Global Engagement) noted that the Joint Education Institute alliance enabled the University to draw on recent best practice from across the sector and to build on well-established operating models. A number of TNE institutes that had been previously established incorporate clauses on Freedom of Speech within formal agreements. It was a priority to ensure that staff and student safeguarding remained at the forefront of the initiatives.
- 14.6 Thanks were extended to the University community for their input and feedback to the plans. Legal and external expert advice had been sought, and robust mitigations would be built into the projects.
- 14.7 Senate collectively affirmed their strong support and enthusiasm for the TNE partnerships in China and Egypt and recognized the importance of these strategic initiatives to realising Exeter's Strategy 2030 ambitions and to build the University's global reputation and brand recognition and contribute to improvement in QS league-table rankings. It was also affirmed that the University should proactively utilize these TNE partnerships as a mechanism to build deep seated engagement with government, education, research and business stakeholders to enhance academic and employer engagement opportunities.

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AGREED: that a further assurance report would be scheduled for Senate on the academic elements of the TNE partnerships in Egypt and China.

15 National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2024 – Results and Analysis (SEN/14/24-25)

- 15.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the update on the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results and analysis;
- 15.2 The following was noted in discussion:
 - 15.2.1 The fact the University's small decline in actual performance in the NSS (down from 80.9% in 2023 to 80.3% in 2024) had resulted in a marked drop in position from 47th to 83rd in the sector clearly signaled that there was significant clustering in institutional performance. Nevertheless, it was noted that the University of Surrey, for example, had improved its performance over the last four years, moving from 102nd in the sector to 14th in a year, before advancing to 10th and subsequent 4th in the year. This reaffirmed the potential to significantly improve institutional performance;
 - 15.2.2 A number of other institutions had improved their performance and the University was identifying opportunities to learn from wider sector insights and best practice to consider how to improve institutional performance;
 - 15.2.3 that there was a need to retain a continued institutional focus on the strategic importance of improving performance in the NSS, especially in relation to Assessment and Feedback;
 - 15.2.4 that there was an opportunity to more clearly utilize and repurpose the specific lexicon and

terminology used in the NSS in relation to Assessment and Feedback to signal when feedback was being provided and to signpost referencing and marketing criteria so students were aware when this was being provided. Similarly, there were also opportunities to more clearly foreground how and when career options were being discussed;

15.2.5 the data emphasized the importance of providing feedback to students regularly and making them more aware of the nature and consistency of marking and feedback provided;

15.2.6 the need to reaffirm across the wider-University the importance of providing high-quality teaching and highlight that staff were increasingly being promoted to Professor on the basis of excellent educational performance and NSS scores which reaffirmed the University was prioritizing this area of institutional activity alongside research;

15.3 The Chair of Senate reaffirmed that as the next NSS would be opening at the University in February 2025 it would be paramount to maintain a sustained focus on improvements in the coming months to try and enhance institutional performance.

15.4 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Education called on Senate members to foster a sense of community within Departments and Faculties and to encourage students to actively reflect on and recognize the value of constructive feedback.

AGREED: to provide a clearer breakdown of priority actions to improve performance in Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) in table and aligned to key thematic areas for the report presented to Council on 10 December 2024.

AGREED: to schedule a Senate 'deep-dive' on enhancing institutional performance in NSS.

16 Research Performance Report and REF2029 (SEN/15/24-25)

16.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Impact introduced the Research Performance Report and REF2029 to Senate members.

16.2 The paper provided an overview of the University's research performance, focusing on key performance indicators (KPIs), research awards and applications, research income per full-time equivalent (FTE), and the University's preparedness for the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

16.3 Research income per FTE ranked Exeter 20th out of 24 in the Russell Group, a position that had remained consistent.

16.4 REF2029 incorporated a number of key changes. The three key elements from REF 2014 and REF 2021 had been renamed, with their content and weightings rebalanced as follows:

16.4.1 'Contribution to knowledge and understanding' is now 50%, previously 'Outputs' was 60%

16.4.2 'People, culture and environment' is now 25%, previously 'Environment' was 15%

16.4.3 'Engagement and Impact' is now 25%, previously 'Impact' percentage unchanged

16.5 Further amendments to submission policy and their weighting within the submission were anticipated. This was still under consultation and a further announcement was expected in the summer of 2025.

16.6 The most significant change to the submission was the decoupling of outputs from individual researchers, shifting the focus to research power, which will be based on the average FTE over the 2025/26 and 2026/27 academic years. As a result, the quality of the outputs will be critically important.

16.7 In previous submissions, it was required that researchers be in post on census days, but this was no longer a requirement. The University was now able to include outputs from individuals who are no longer at the institution, based on an average FTE over the two previously mentioned academic years.

16.8 Staff were encouraged to focus on outputs from the perspective of grant reviewers, taking originality, impact and rigour into consideration, in order to ensure the submission of 3- and 4-star publications.

ENDORSED: the Research Performance Report 2023/24 and paper on REF 2029 to Research and Innovation Committee (28 November 2024) and Council (10 December 2024).

17 Items Brought Forward from Part II (SEN/17/24-25)

17.1 The Education Board Terms of Reference and Membership and the Postgraduate Research Board Terms of Reference were approved.

17.2 The following papers were endorsed:

- Amendments to Regulations, Disciplinary and other Procedures
- Ordinance 26: The Powers of Education Board and Postgraduate Research Board **(SEN/18/24- 25)**
- Student Complaints Procedure **(SEN/19/24-25)**
- Academic Assurance Plan 2024-25 **(SEN/22/24-25)**
- Research Excellence Framework (REF): Introductory Overview and Background Context **(SEN/23/24-25)**
- Annual Research Integrity Statement **(SEN/24/24-25)**
- Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers: Signatory Annual Report 23-24 **(SEN/25/24-25)**

18 Chair's Closing Remarks

18.1 The Chair thanked all Senate members for their input and engagement.

Part II - Papers to Note

Senate Annual Report 2023/24 **(SEN/26/24-25)**

Academic Promotions Report **(SEN/27/24-25)**

Council Minutes: May 2024 **(SEN/28A/24-25)**

July 2024 **(SEN/28B/24-25)**

Entrance Scholarship Selection Committee Minutes **(SEN/29/24-25)**

Education Board: Minutes of October 2024 Meeting **(SEN/30/24-25)**

Postgraduate Research Board Minutes **(SEN/31/24-25)**

Awards of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and Conferment of Degrees in Absentia: The award lists, approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, since the last meeting may be inspected by contacting Student Records.

Dates of meetings for 2024/25

12 March 2025

28 May 2025 – Joint Council and Senate Meeting

18 June 2025